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Headline Series

Eastern Europe Today

Emil Lengyel

Joseph C. Harsch

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Eastern Europe Today

by Emil Lengyel

1. The Land and the People

THE SWATH OF NATIONS stretching across Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Aegean could properly be called *l'espace fatal*, fatal space. In two world wars within one generation that belt of land played its fatal part. The first of these wars was unleashed at Sarajevo, a southern city of the belt, where the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary was shot. The second global war was touched off by the Nazi invasion of Poland, in the northern part. And what came to be known as "cold war" in the period after World War II also began in the same area.

The heart of this region is Danubia, but its most explosive part is the Balkans. This entire belt is the great divide between the East and West. Most of the area of our interest in this pamphlet belongs in the Soviet sphere, the region of the "satellite" states, though they do not like the name. Greece is an advance post of the West into the East, as the East sees it, but from the Western point of view, just the reverse. A civil war in Greece kept the "cold war" hot and inspired the Truman Doctrine.

Between World Wars I and II this region consisted of thirteen nations. These included the three small Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940 and set up as constituent republics within Russia. This action has not been recognized by the United States. Austria was also part of this belt, but after World War II came

to play a special role under four-power occupation. Only a small portion of Turkey spills over into the Balkans, and Finland is more Scandinavian than continental. Hence these nations are not included in this pamphlet.

The sizes of the countries under discussion range from that of Albania, with a population of one million and an area equal to that of Maryland, to Poland with a population of 25 million and an area equivalent to Colorado. The other nations of the region are Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece.

The very topography of this region must be considered a *casus belli.* The Balkans proper are extremely rugged, criss-crossed by mountain ranges, with insufficient intercommunication, sometimes stony wastes of the *Karst* type, sometimes wooded mazes—nature-made guerrilla battlefields and sanctuaries for the lawless and the outcasts. There are no wide rivers in the Balkans to provide convenient means of transportation. The mountain brooks are numerous but they do not serve as highways. The Danube merely skirts the region and then turns away. In the central part of Eastern Europe much of the land is marshy. The famous Pripet swamps of Poland are an example. These impenetrable wastes of waterlogged land also encourage a spirit of independence, dissidence and conflicts.

The People and Their Ways

In other parts of Europe, too, great linguistic groups meet and clash, as where the Teuton meets the Latin along the Rhine. But in Eastern Europe and particularly in the Balkans we find a veritable cocktail of people. It has been computed that 163 languages and dialects are spoken by diverse peoples living between the Baltic and Adriatic and Aegean Seas.

This is the western advance post of the Slavs who have made their way in the opposite direction halfway around the globe to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, this is the eastern advance post of the Latins, represented by the Rumanians—probably a diluted strain. This also is the frontier of the Ger-

THE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS

mans, represented by the German-speaking Austrians and Germanic minorities throughout the region.

Here we find important ethnic groups which do not exist elsewhere in Europe—the Magyars and their Finnish and Estonian kin who belong to the Finnish-Ugrian branch of the great Ural-Altayan family. Vestiges of the Balkan Turks are present, and this area was a center of Jewish settlement until Hitler's campaign of extermination turned it into a charnel house. The Gypsy was also very much at home, and we find traces of Russians, Pomaks (Moslem Bulgarians) and such Asiatic groups as Armenians, Circassians and other Caucasian strains.

Religions meet, clash and intermingle in Eastern Europe, accentuating national problems. Straight across this area runs the historic frontier between eastern and western Christianity. Roman Catholicism is the dominant creed of Poland, Hungary, western Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. In the last named country it is strongly tinged with the protesting pre-Reformation spirit of the Hussites.

To the east of Rome's influence lies the realm of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Eastern Church, known briefly as the Greek Orthodox Church. Today it consists of national churches in the Soviet Union, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, although in communion and nominally under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul. Since these churches are under their own national heads, new political regimes can deal more easily with them than with the Roman Catholic Church with its strong international ties.

This is also the land of the Uniates, Greek Catholics who have their eastern liturgy and discipline but are in communion with the Pope. Today, people professing this creed are subjected to strong pressure to join the Greek Orthodox faith, so as to break the hold of the Holy See of Rome on an important part of Eastern Europe's population.

While the center of Protestantism is farther to the west, parts of this region form Protestant enclaves in a Catholic and Greek Orthodox world. Religious dissidence was encouraged by the

peripheral position of this area relative to East and West and by rugged nature. The Unitarian creed was born in Poland and Transylvania. Transylvania is like America's Pennsylvania not only in its "sylvan" nature of forests and hills but also as a sanctuary of many religious creeds. The city of Debrecen, in the heart of predominantly Catholic Hungary, is known as the "Calvinist Rome." Almost all the six million Moslems of Europe live in the southeast. It is the only part of the continent in which all the three great monotheistic religions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—are represented.

The great diversity of this region is manifested not only in differences of tongues and creeds. The vertical contrasts among people here are greater than in the West, in spite of the tremendous gap between mansion and slum in Paris, London and New York. The vertical differences of Eastern Europe can best be illustrated by placing Albania's primitive tribesmen side by side with Czech scholars. The distance between northern Albania and Prague is a few short hours by air—yet the two places are centuries apart in cultural and economic development. A literate person in Albania until recently was a rarity, while in Czechoslovakia an illiterate person is a strange phenomenon.

Rich or Poor Land?

Eastern Europe's natural resources—its land and minerals—are potentially rich, although several of the component nations remain actually poor. Particularly rich is new Poland's Upper Silesia, containing the vastly productive "Eastern Ruhr" with its great industrial and undersoil wealth. Czechoslovakia as an industrial nation is a miniature of the United States. Most of the entire region, however, is agrarian.

Some of the soil is the best in Europe, especially the Hungarian Alföld, plains, the fertile humus of the Backa in northern Yugoslavia (known as the Voyvodina today), the Banat along the Yugoslav-Rumanian border, the Moldavian and Wallachian plains of Rumania and the river valleys everywhere. But much of the land is steppe, sometimes covered with sand dunes, which

only irrigation could redeem, and some of it is marshy needing drainage. Some of the land is strongly alkaline, while other is what the Balkan peoples call *Karst* or *Carso,* naked limestone plateau. Sometimes even the rich land is scourged by drought as Moldavia was in 1946.

The area has abundant timber resources, containing many of the nontropical trees. The coastline facing the Mediterranean is tropical in spots. Rumania's oil wells around Ploesti, at the foot of the southwestern Carpathians, are Europe's most productive, with a maximum output of eight million tons of crude oil annually before the war. Great opportunities are open for further discoveries, as shown by results in southwest Hungary and to the north of Vienna.

Much of this region is very rich in mineral wealth, but exploration has not been thorough in most places. Coal is still king among industrial raw materials, and there is an abundance of it in southwestern Poland and adjacent Czech districts.

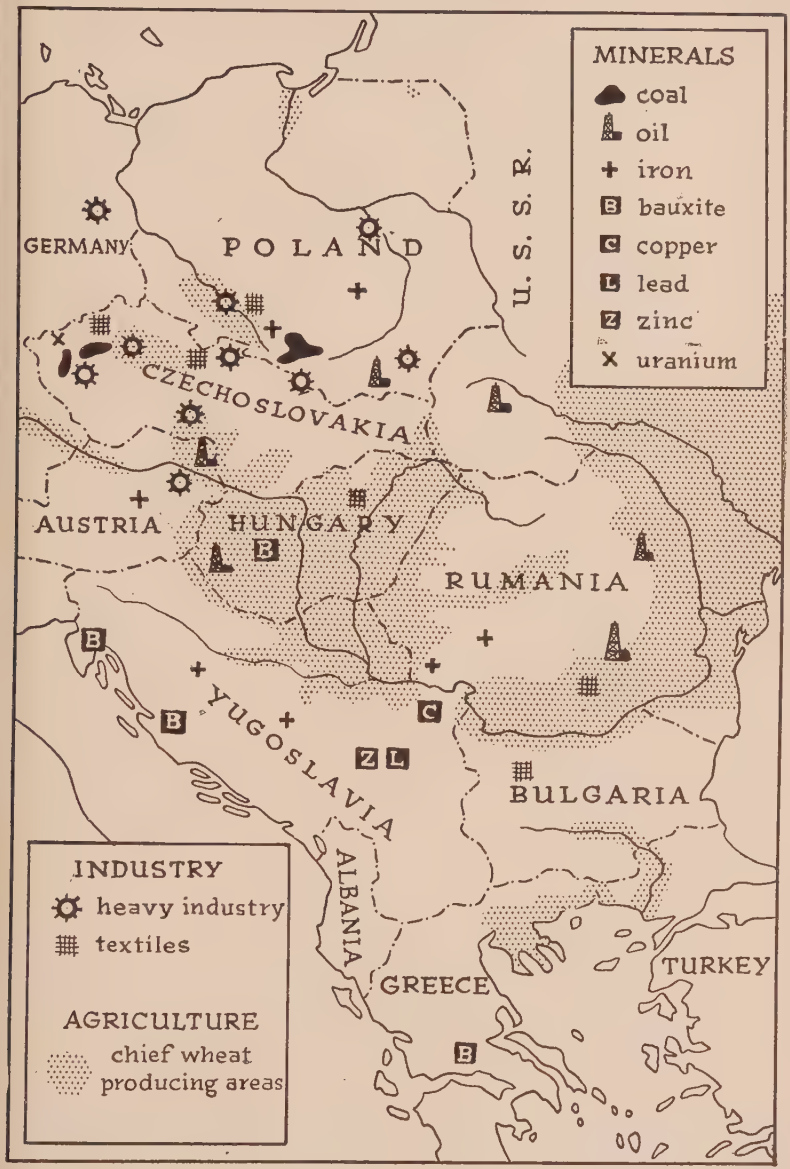
In our atom-conscious age an important mineral is uranium ore. Czechoslovakia has uranium at Joachimsthal, the source of the pitchblend with which the Curies demonstrated radioactive energy. (It is of historic interest to recall that Joachimsthal had given the world the silver which, coined into money, became the Joachimsthaler, or thaler and eventually dollar.)

This region is short of first-class iron-ore, another key mineral of our industrial civilization. But the area, particularly Poland and Yugoslavia, has valuable veins of nonferrous metals, such as copper, zinc, lead, chromite, antimony and bauxite.

The Closed Door

Why is this area such a trouble center, and, particularly, why has the very name of the Balkans become a byword for confusion, anarchy, mass-murder? The answer is given by geography, topography and history. This area was peripheral to the great empires of the past, Roman, Eastern Roman, and later, French and English. The character of the region was formed in the early Middle Ages when Asia's nomads fled the desiccation of

THE RESOURCES OF EASTERN EUROPE



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES

their vast grazing grounds and wandered toward the fabulous realms of Europe's West. Many of them could never reach their goal, as the earlier comers had settled the western lands. Those who came late were forced to remain in the East, treading on one anothers' toes, fighting with their neighbors.

The rest of Europe was settled by strong groups which eventually crystallized into nations. These mighty states developed gravitational pulls, as do celestial bodies, while the smaller countries fell into the orbits of the greater powers, were absorbed by them or were allowed to exist as dependencies—satellites.

Sometimes the great powers agreed to divide the loot in preference to entering the lists. For instance, the empires of Russia and Austria and the Kingdom of Prussia partitioned Poland at the conference table in the late eighteenth century instead of going to war. When the Ottoman Empire fell into decay, the rapacious powers sought to establish a balance among themselves so as to eliminate the danger of war. In the nineteenth century Great Britain's secular policy was to contain Russia which, having extended all the way across the Siberian wilderness to the Pacific shores, wanted to obtain warm water ports in Europe.

Then Germany, another "giant that was late," wanted to attach this region to its own orbit. Before World War I, the Reich's *Drang nach Osten,* drive toward the East, pointed toward Turkey and the Persian Gulf. Southeastern Europe fitted admirably into the German scheme. Here was a large territory with great potential wealth which could be turned into a profitable colonial region at the very back door of the Reich—Africa in Europe. Under the Hitler regime a similar eastward drive pointed toward the Ukraine, breadbasket of the Old World, and toward the oil treasury of the Caucasus.

Southeastern Europe, with its Slavic population centers, had been for centuries one of Russia's ports of entry into world politics and trade. It was also the battleground for rivalries with the Hapsburgs, with Germany, with England, and in the twentieth century it served as a staging area for Russia's foes, for the German armies which twice within a generation smashed east-

ward. As the Second World War ended, the Soviet Union's Red Army swept into this region in the wake of Germany's cataclysmic defeat, providing Moscow with a unique opportunity for fulfilling long-standing ambitions.

The Western Allies had no thought of ceding this crucial area to the Kremlin. But as the end of World War II drew near, an arrangement had to be made as to how far the East and West would penetrate. We learn from the memoirs of Cordell Hull, wartime Secretary of State of the United States, that it was the British who first broached the subject of spheres of military operations in the Balkans in the spring of 1944. A temporary arrangement was reached by which Rumania and Hungary were assigned to the Soviet armed forces, while Greece was to be the operation area of Britain. The State Department objected, but President Roosevelt accepted the compromise for a trial period of three months, and this period was later extended indefinitely. At the Moscow conference later in the year, Mr. Hull was informed that Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden had made further arrangements even reducing to percentages the degree of influence which Britain and Russia would have in specified Balkan countries. "Cables from our embassies in Moscow and Ankara," Mr. Hull continued, "mentioned that Russia would have 75/25 or 80/20 predominance in Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania, while Britain and Russia would share influence 50/50 in Yugoslavia."

In the United States' view these and the other Eastern European countries were to remain free to find their way to true democracy. This view was incorporated in the peace treaties which the victorious Allies framed. Nonetheless, the pattern of great power intervention in Balkan affairs was not easily changed, and the postwar years saw a renewal of old conflicts in new guises.

2. The Peoples' Democracies

DURING THE INTERWAR period, Eastern Europe was used as a great sanitary cordon, *cordon sanitaire,* behind which the Bolshevik revolution was quarantined. In nearly all the countries of the area the Communist party was outlawed, and an entire generation grew up for which the very name of Bolshevism was taboo. This chain of states received moral and material aid, including financial and military assistance, from Western European governments to help keep the Russian bear in its cage.

True, communism after World War I did make a stand in one of these countries, Hungary, under the leadership of Béla Kun, but it was destroyed quickly by a counterrevolutionary regime headed by Admiral Nicholas Horthy, set up in the spring of 1919, one of whose main aims was to combat communism. In Bulgaria the left-wing peasant leader, Alexander Stambuliski, was assassinated by right-wing adherents four years later. The subsequent government, headed by Alexander Tsankov, called itself "Democratic Entente" but was in reality an autocratic rule, committed to a strong anti-Communist line.

In Albania an audacious young man, Ahmed Bey Zogu, seized the reins in 1928 and, calling himself King Zog, "Mbreti Shqiptarvet," King of the Eagle's Sons, set up his own autocratic rule. So primitive were this country's ways that its peoples' thoughts were turned toward tribal feuds.

After the Russian revolution, Poland served as an important base for the West's crusade against communism, receiving French support in the Polish-Russian war of 1920. Marshal Joseph

Pilsudski, an erstwhile Socialist, seized the helm in 1926, crushing left-wing opposition and remaining in power for nine years. When he died, his successor, the less able Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz, continued to carry on Warsaw's anti-Soviet line.

Other countries, too, fell under dictatorial rule which invariably meant increased pressure against the Communists. In Yugoslavia, King Alexander I, the Karageorgevich, abolished the constitution and dismissed parliament in 1929 and set up a strongly anti-left-wing royal dictatorship. In Greece General John Metaxas established a dictatorship in 1936 which was violently anti-Communistic. In Rumania there was a dictatorship of corruption and wealth and a dissolute king in the person of Carol II. During most of the interwar period there was no communication between this country and its Soviet neighbor. Czechoslovakia was the only genuine democracy of this area in the Western sense of the word, and there Communists formed an accepted political party.

The Transition Period

When the German Third Reich conquered this region from the Baltic to the Aegean, it stamped out the last remaining survivals of socialism and communism. During the Second World War when Hitler's henchmen held full sway, the left wing appeared to be completely extinct. However a radical underground suddenly emerged when the Red Army swept into this region. The Soviet victory turned black into white overnight. For years it was considered the worst of crimes to be a Bolshevik; now it became the supreme virtue. This dramatic change entailed certain problems for the new rulers. Account had to be taken of the strong bias of the masses, and, therefore, the first governments were camouflaged as coalitions in which non-Communists often held positions that were nominally highest. Another problem was the question of Communist leadership. Since the party had been outlawed in almost all these countries, very few trained leaders were available on the spot. A large number of them had to be imported from the Soviet Union, a haven and training

ground for exiled Eastern European Communists during the interwar period.

The first post-liberation government of Rumania, for instance, was named the "National Democratic Front," in which the representatives of the Liberal and Peasant parties were also included. Hungary began with a coalition cabinet in which the Smallholders' party, headed by Ferenc Nagy, had numerical predominance, working together with the Socialists and Communists. Eventually, in the spring of 1947, Mr. Nagy was "persuaded" to leave the country; the Socialists and Communists formed the Workers' party, and a Peoples' Front of Independence was set up. In this government the highest nominal positions were occupied by non-Communists, but the Vice-Premier, Mátyás Rákosi, top Communist of the country, held the real power. Czechoslovakia had a "National Front," Yugoslavia a "National Committee of Liberation" and Poland a "Government of National Unity."

Non-co-operation was dealt with drastically. In Bulgaria, Agrarian leader Nikolai Petkov was executed for "high treason" in September 1947, while in Rumania Peasant leaders Iuliu Maniu and Ion Michalache were sentenced two months later to life imprisonment for "espionage in the interests of Western powers" and other deeds. Similar purges took place in the other countries as well.

Parliamentary elections in most of these countries took place on single lists, with each of the participating parties receiving a certain number of seats but with the Communists always in favored position. Governments under this system were called "peoples' democracies," and Vice Premier Rákosi of Hungary defined them as "dictatorship of the proletariat without the Soviet form." Since democracy already includes *demos,* the people, "peoples' democracy" is something of a tautology.

The war was still on, when in October, 1944, the first Communist-dominated government was set up in Southeastern Europe, in Albania. This was something of a paradox, as Albania would appear to be the least qualified to become Communistic

—partly tribal and partly feudal as it was. In the early spring of 1945 Josip Brozovich, or Broz, a former metal worker, far better known as Marshal Tito, established a popular front government in Yugoslavia. At about the same time Petru Groza became head of the National Democratic Front of Rumania, from which, however, the two most important parties, Liberal and Peasant, were missing. Western pressure induced the Rumanian government to have these two groups represented eventually but only by men of lesser importance.

Communist parties operated interim governments from the background in other countries of this region as well. Elections in Bulgaria in October 1946 resulted in victory for the Communist-dominated Peoples' Republic. In the first Hungarian postwar election, the Communists received only 17 per cent of the votes but formed a coalition with the Social Democrats, National Peasants and the Smallholders. Even at the elections of August 31, 1947, the Communist party polled only 22 per cent of the votes. Finally, elections took place in the spring of 1949, when a list of candidates was submitted to the voters for acceptance or rejection. The voters accepted the list by an overwhelming majority. In January 1947 the Polish elections took place at which about 90 per cent voted for the Communist-controlled Democratic bloc.

Czechoslovakia had been ruled by a coalition government since liberation, with Klement Gottwald, a Communist, the Prime Minister since the summer of 1946. Parliamentary elections were to take place in 1948, and the question arose as to who should control the police at the time of polling. A majority of the cabinet ordered the Communist Minister of the Interior to stop the practice of packing the police with members of his own party. A conflict arose which resulted in the coup of February 25, 1948, when the Communists took over. A few days later Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister since 1941, was found dead outside the window of his flat over the ministry, a tragic and mysterious climax to Czechoslovakia's vain struggle to maintain Western democracy.

Shortage of Leaders

Since the Communists did not have trained native leaders resident in most of these countries, the problem of filling top posts became a difficult one. They attempted to solve it by drawing on the supply of party members who had spent terms of exile in the Soviet Union or, in rare instances, in other countries where communism had not been illegal. The life stories of these returned exiles reveal a great deal about Eastern European politics, past and present. Their background is a mixture of revolution and repression, strikes, time spent in jail or in hiding. As a result they are often hardened, with single-minded devotion to their cause and without mercy for their opponents.

One of the strongest personalities of this region, the late Bulgarian leader, Georgi Dimitrov, had spent over a decade in the Soviet Union and returned to Sofia, the capital, in the wake of the Red Army. It is reported that this born-rebel, who was a trade union organizer in his youth, directed and took part in about 680 strikes in his native Bulgaria in four years before the First World War. When the Communists were outlawed after the war, he went underground, served as the chief of the Communist International in the Balkans. He became a front-page headliner when he stood trial in Germany in 1933 for his alleged participation in setting the Reichstag on fire. His quick wit, repartee and fanatic adherence to communism completely confused the testy Nazi hero Hermann Goering. The Hitlerites got rid of Dimitrov by shipping him to Russia, where he became the Secretary General of the Communist International and a Soviet citizen. Upon his return to Sofia he took a similar post in the Bulgarian Communist party, was appointed Prime Minister and was hailed as a national hero.

When Dimitrov died in the summer of 1949, his friend, Vassil Kolarov, was chosen as Premier. Kolarov had also spent an exile in Russia—twenty years. There was a price on his head when he fled to the Soviet Union as a young man because he had been one of the founders and policy-makers of the Bulgarian

Communist party. He returned to Bulgaria in 1945, led the provisional government's delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in the following year and served as Foreign Minister and the first President of the country before a Presidium replaced the latter office.

Another "ex-Russian" was a woman, red-headed "Tsola" Dragoitcheva, lover of adventure, organizer and spell-binder. Early in the war she seems to have been parachuted by the Soviets into Bulgaria where she helped to set up an anti-Nazi united front underground. Later she became secretary general of the Bulgarian Fatherland Committee.

In Communist Rumania leadership was entrusted to another woman who had received her training in the Soviet Union, Ana Pauker. She had studied medicine at Zurich, had joined the Socialist party in Rumania, had been jailed many times, had gone underground, aiding in the conversion of left-wing Socialists to communism. In the middle thirties she was jailed again and severely wounded by her captors on the way to prison. She was held for eighteen months before being tried and sentenced to ten years. She served only five years of this term and was exchanged in 1941 for Rumanian citizens in Russia. She became a Soviet citizen and a member of the Comintern Executive Committee. With her return to Rumania at the end of the war, she took office as the first woman Foreign Minister in the world and helped to set up the Cominform. Besides a sharp mind, she has a sharp tongue, fluent in several languages. The Rumanian National Democratic Front became the extended shadow of her strong personality.

For the same reason—lack of home-grown Communists—a set of "ex-Russians" became Hungary's post-liberation leaders. Tops among them was Mátyás Rákosi, the Deputy Premier, who assigned "higher" positions, such as the Presidency and Premiership, to his puppets. Like Ana Pauker, he, too, is a linguist who can converse in half a dozen languages, including Turkish. Born in Hungary, he originally wanted to become a consular official of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy. During the First World

War he served as a soldier, was taken prisoner by the Russians, met Lenin, and became a fanatic Communist.

Returning to Hungary after the war, he was made a commissar in the short-lived Communist government of Béla Kun. He managed to escape from the country before the police of the new ruler, Regent Nicholas Horthy, caught up with him, went to Russia and became secretary of the Communist International. In 1925 he sneaked back to Hungary in order to set up the Communist party again, was arrested and tried for his life. He escaped death, probably because of international interest in his case, and was sentenced to eight and one-half years in one of the worst jails of Europe. He spent much of that time in solitary confinement. At the expiration of his term, he was rearrested and made to stand trial for "mass murder, conspiracy, treason," etc., which he had allegedly committed as a member of the Béla Kun cabinet nearly fifteen years before. This time he was sentenced to life but was released from jail in 1940, when relations between the Soviet Union, Germany and Germany's satellites appeared to be good. He went to Russia, returning to Hungary in the wake of the Red Army. Besides being Vice Premier, he also became Secretary General of the Hungarian Communist party.

Rákosi maintained, in an interview with H. F. Arthur Schoenfeld, former American Minister to Hungary, that he and his Communist colleagues had the advantage over non-Communist politicians in the post-liberation years in that they had had working experience with government problems in the Soviet Union. Other Hungarian leaders, emerging from the chaos of the war, could not match this experience. Commenting on this interview in *Foreign Affairs,* Mr. Schoenfeld pointed out: "There was some truth in the Rákosi statement. The Communist leaders were energetic and able men; and it was apparent that they intended to fill the administrative vacuum, with or without the backing of the electorate."

Probably the most effective of these Russian-trained Hungarian leaders in the engineering field was Ernö Gerö, called

the "bridge-builder" because of his effective part in rebuilding the Danube bridges of Budapest. He and his Russian-trained Hungarian team also performed remarkable feats in repairing the country's railroad service in record-breaking time. A third member of this triumvirate was Zoltán Vass, ex-inmate of Hungarian jails, Communist ex-mayor of Budapest, economics dictator, an able organizer but lacking Gerö's integrity.

Yugoslavia's Tito himself received Russian training. He was born on a Croat farm and led the humdrum life of a peasant boy. His country was then part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and at the outbreak of the First World War, at the age of twenty-four, he was sent to the Russian front. He detested the Austrians and liked the Russians, his own Slavic kin. He deserted to the Russians and was confined by them to a prisoner of war camp until 1917 when the Red revolution broke out. He was released to fight in the Red Army. When the civil war in Russia was over, he received his training for Comintern work. In 1921 he returned to Croatia where he became a labor leader under King Alexander's regime, serving several sentences in some of the toughest Balkan jails. After his release he went abroad to work for the Spanish Loyalists. Back again in his native land, he remained quiet when the Axis invaded Yugoslavia but promptly went into action after the Nazis had invaded the Soviet Union. The story of his leadership of Yugoslavia's Partisans and his rivalry with General Draja Mikhailovitch is a chapter of world history.

Albania was not one of the countries in which one could learn the ways of communism between the two wars. The leader of Communist Albania, Colonel General Enver Hoxha, became a Communist in Paris as a student. He knew how to mask himself so well that he was employed later, although still a Communist, by the strongly anti-Communist Albanian consulate in Brussels. He returned to Albania in 1936 to teach French there, but he also taught communism on the side. He joined a group opposing dictatorial King Zog, and was removed as a teacher. When the Italians invaded his country in 1939, he led the demon-

stration against them, then fled into the impenetrable mountains and was condemned to death *in absentia.* He fought with the partisan troops and achieved considerable local fame. When the war was over, the ex-teacher turned out to be Albania's "strong man."

Hoxha had a Russian-trained countryman at his side, Albania's "Gray Eminence," Professor Sefjulla Maleshova. He had left Albania under Zog's rule to escape persecution and returned after liberation to become Minister of Popular Culture and Propaganda and later Minister of Public Instruction.

When Czechoslovakia went Communist early in 1948, the question of leadership presented no special problem. Unlike the other Eastern European countries, Czechoslovakia had a democratic government between the two wars, and the Communist party was represented. Moravian-born Klement Gottwald, a farmer's son and a trained carpenter, was a founder of the Czech Communist party, became its chairman in 1926, left his native land after the Munich Pact, went to Russia and became the leader of the Soviet branch of the Czechoslovak Liberation Movement. First he was Vice Premier, then Premier and, finally, President of the Republic.

A professional politician for many years, Antonin Zapotocky served as the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Communist member of parliament, Secretary General of the Revolutionary Trade Organization of Czechoslovakia. The Germans kept him in concentration camps for six years. After liberation, he was elected chairman of the United Revolutionary Trade Organization, a deputy of the Provisional National Assembly and then of the Constituent National Assembly, chairman of the assembly, Deputy Premier and Premier.

The leaders of Communist Poland were also homegrown, but originally they were left-wing Socialists, and thus not completely outlawed. Boleslav Bierut, who became President of Poland, was active in the fight against Czarism from the age of thirteen. He worked as a mason's hand, newspaper boy and printer, took active part in the co-operative movement before World War I,

was imprisoned as the editor of the Workers' Co-operative Newspaper, went to Austria and Germany to study sociology, returned to Poland more to the left than before, was imprisoned again for anti-Fascist activities, and went into the underground under the German occupation during the war.

Joseph Cyrankievicz served as an artillery officer in the Polish army in World War II and was detained by the Germans at the Mauthausen camp where he was liberated by United States troops. He served as Secretary General of the Socialist Party of Poland, which Westerners called pseudo-Socialist, and climbed to prominence as Premier.

Cadres for Leadership

Although the Communists have been able to find either Soviet-trained or home-grown leaders for the higher ranks in Eastern European governments, they have been handicapped in filling less prominent political and administrative posts. Not only have they been affected by the heritage of prewar regimes when communism was tantamount to treason, but they have also been impeded by the fact that this is a peasant belt with the traditional conservatism of the peasant much in evidence.

In an effort to solve this problem, Communist leaders drew up a three-point training program. First, promising youth were to be indoctrinated, given careers in party work and made to acquire vested interest in the success of the cause. In a remarkably short time a surprisingly large number of fanatical young Communists have been trained in Eastern Europe. The dogmatic creed and simple solutions of Bolshevism seem to appeal to youth disillusioned by violently anti-Communist Fascist failures. Second, specialists were subjected to intensive courses of political training to remove the marks of previous anti-Communist indoctrination. Finally, the lower echelons were recruited among friendly Socialists and, when the need arose, among the lesser ex-Fascists, considered relatively untainted by their previous political affiliations.

3. Economic Problems

In the communist interpretation of history, economics plays a dominant role. The supremacy of economic factors is evident in the governmental policies of Eastern European countries and in their relations to the Soviet Union. The most significant changes of this type since the war may be summarized under these headings: 1) The establishment of planned economy. 2) Land reform and land improvement. 3) Large-scale industrialization.

Regional Planning

Communists are convinced that planned economy is as superior to *laissez faire* economy as the tractor is to the wooden plow. Since they aim to adopt a fully planned economy, they are also convinced that they are bound to win in the life and death struggle between capitalism and communism. Wherever feasible, international planning appears to them no less desirable than national planning, and it has now become feasible in Eastern Europe.

Before the Soviet revolution, a large part of this area belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had a sufficiently large and diversified economic system to benefit from its unity. When the monarchy was broken up after the First World War, the unified economic system was replaced by atomized systems, and several of these countries fell on evil days. The Little Entente nations—Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia—considered economic co-operation among its members, and so did the members of the Balkan Union—Rumania, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece.

These were plans which, however, failed to materialize. The region remained broken up into small units trying to be self-sufficient behind high tariff walls erected for the protection of native industries and farming.

This economic picture changed when the Nazis took over in Germany, because to them this was *Lebensraum No. 1,* an economic subsidiary, which would provide them with food and industrial raw materials, while taking from them their finished industrial products. After the Third Reich had annexed Austria in 1938, Greater Germany supplied 42 per cent of the imports and took 45 per cent of the exports of Europe's southeast. The corresponding figures were much larger in the case of Bulgaria—52 and 59 per cent.

After the Second World War, these countries benefited from the remarkable work of the UNRRA, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which provided an excellent object lesson that centrifugal economic trends could and should be combated.

As the rift between East and West widened, however, the United Nations received less actual co-operation from its members. Then came the Marshall Plan—considered by Communist regimes as a fighting instrument of the United States, a method of "buying up" loyalties in strategic areas. In January 1949 the East set up the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, popularly known as "Comecon"—Communist Economic Organization—the aim of which was described by its founders as "organizing broader economic co-operation between the countries of people's democracy and the U.S.S.R."

Planning on a large regional scale was thus an official policy. How much of the planning would be co-ordinated with the economy of the Soviet Union was also a matter of great importance. The signatories of the Comecon signed twenty-year treaties of mutual economic assistance. The idea was that capital, which is scarce in this region, would be pooled and doled out to the countries in need of it. The Soviet Union would also make its contribution in goods and engineering ability. In turn, Russia

would greatly profit from the special gifts possessed by the satellites. Possibly, this co-operation would lead to a customs union and, in time, to an economic union.

Trade East of the Great Divide

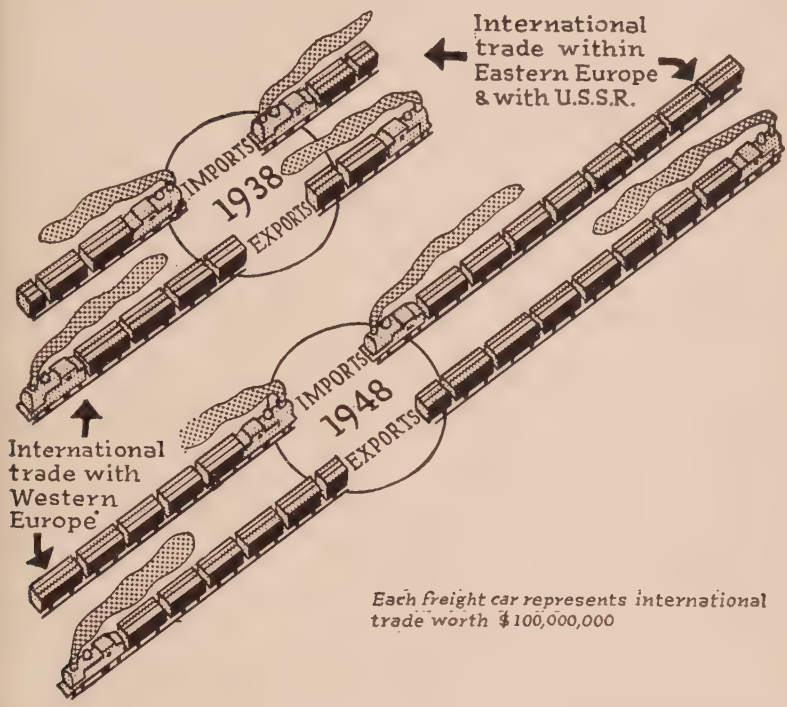
Before the Second World War the trade of this region with the Soviet Union was negligible—less than 1 per cent of the total for Eastern European nations. In the case of most of the Balkan countries it was almost non-existent. How could it be otherwise since these countries were producing the very farm products which are Russia's principal products? Also, there was no adequate transportation between this area and Russia.

The Soviet Union's economic policy toward this area has undergone several changes since the end of the war. First, Russia wanted to get the utmost in economic "assistance" from both defeated nations and allies in Eastern Europe in order to make up for the war's great devastation within its own country. The assumption was that Eastern Europe would return to prewar trade patterns, including a substantial volume of exchange with the West.

However, Moscow saw that Eastern Europe might be forced into the Western orbit, politically as well as economically, if the Kremlin's policy was pivoted on booty. In the autumn of 1946 Russian tactics changed. Soviet leaders encouraged industrial developments within their sphere of influence, stressing the lighter industries which could provide consumer products for the Russian market. There was still the possibility that the West, with its heavy industries, would provide the capital goods needed in Russia.

Another basic change occurred in 1948 as the result of the Marshall Plan and the break with Tito. Soviet leaders appeared ready to settle down behind their own frontiers, protected by the friendly regimes of Eastern Europe—the sanitary cordon in reverse. This meant that Russia would have to rely on its own production and on the maximum trade with the countries within its sphere for the products of both light and heavy industries.

Changing Pattern of Eastern Europe's Trade



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In October 1948 Hungary and the Soviet Union concluded a trade agreement, calling for increased exports and imports. Two months later a supplementary agreement was reached between Czechoslovakia and the Kremlin providing for a gold loan from Russia and a 45 per cent increase of trade over the current year. In January 1949 Rumania and the Soviet Union concluded a new agreement which provided for an exchange of goods 150 per cent above the previous year. At the same time a trade agreement with Bulgaria called for a 20 per cent increase over the year before. The Eastern European countries also undertook to increase the volume of trade among themselves.

The United Nations Economic Survey of Europe in 1948

shows that the Eastern European group of countries, including the U.S.S.R., Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia, transacted about one-half of their total foreign trade among themselves in 1948, as compared with one-fifth before the war. The chief element in the increase was the expansion of trade between the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries. The volume of trade among the six smaller Eastern European countries in 1948 was about a quarter greater than ten years before. Exports from these countries to Russia were about ten times higher, and their imports from the Soviet Union were twenty-five times greater than before the war.

The U.S.S.R.'s trade with these countries includes both manufactured goods and primary products. Some of the Soviet exports to these countries consist of such raw materials as cotton, iron ore, manganese, chemicals and grains, in addition to machinery and tractors. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland are shipping light manufactures as well as heavy industrial equipment to Russia, besides raw materials. This pattern differs from the German Third Reich's relations with the "satellite" countries. The latter were semi-colonial, raw-material producers, while Germany was the manufacturing hub.

Long-term trade agreements between the Soviets and the other Eastern European countries provide for further expansion of trade. In one year, through 1949, the trade of the U.S.S.R. with Poland is scheduled to rise 35 per cent and with Czechoslovakia 45 per cent. Trade with Rumania is to be doubled and with Hungary to be trebled.

Reparations

Those of the Eastern European countries which were on the losing side during the war were also compelled to pay reparations to the Soviet Union. Rumania and Hungary were "fined" $300 million each, of which Russia receives the full amount in the case of Rumania and $200 million in the case of Hungary, while the remainder was to be divided equally between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Bulgaria, whose guilt was less because

its wartime regime never declared war on the Soviet Union, had to pay $45 million to Greece and $25 million to Yugoslavia. Reparations were to be paid in goods at prewar dollar prices. While this increased the burden, it was an arrangement which kept the industries of the defeated countries going full blast.

Again insofar as the defeated countries were concerned, the Potsdam Declaration in the summer of 1945 provided that the Soviet Union was entitled to German assets in those countries. The definition was extremely vague, as the Germans had made it a practice to take over pretty much what they liked. At any rate, the Soviets have turned many of these German assets into joint companies, the stock of which they share with the country in question. Real power in these companies rests in the hands of the managers, and the Kremlin has seen to it that the fifty-fifty arrangement works out so that ultimate control is held by Soviet-appointed directors.

Some of the most valuable assets of these countries belong to such joint companies. In Hungary, for instance, they control oil, Danubian navigation, air transportation, leading financial and credit institutions, and bauxite, in which the country is very rich. The people of Budapest, always ready to change a sob into a smile, have this to say about these arrangements: "At any rate, fifty-fifty Danubian navigation is genuine. The Soviets navigate the river lengthwise, we navigate it sidewise."

Trade with the West

East and West trade relations have declined greatly since the war. In 1948 Western Europe exported $255 million worth of goods to Eastern Europe (not including the Soviet Union), only 47 per cent of the corresponding figure ten years before. In 1948 Eastern Europe exported goods worth $312 million to Western Europe, only 42 per cent of the corresponding figure for 1938. This was partly due to the "cold war" and partly to monetary exchange difficulties.

Nevertheless, since the end of the war numerous trade agreements have been concluded between countries of this zone and

the Western world. Poland, for instance, has signed thirty such pacts, including a very important one with the United Kingdom, calling for a billion dollars worth of trade both ways in five years.

Considerably more than half of Czechoslovakia's foreign trade after World War II was with the West, and the same was true of Yugoslavia even before the Cominform break.

This interdependence of East and West was recognized in the calculations of the Marshall Plan countries of Europe. It has been estimated that Western Europe would receive 17.6 per cent of its imports from Eastern Europe, representing $2.3 billion, while sending 19 per cent of its exports, $2 billion, to the East by the 1952 target year.

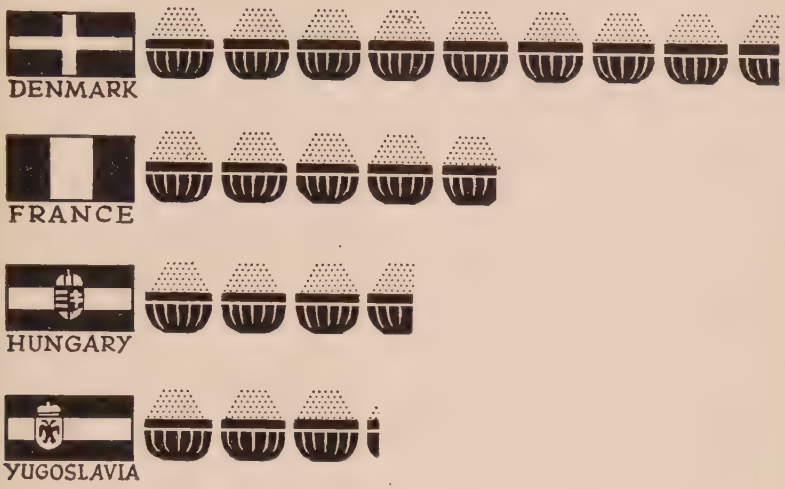
The Soviet Union has been pressing for greater East-West trade. Soviet delegate Dr. A. A. Arutiunian expressed the hope at the Geneva meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission in mid-May 1949 that a much larger exchange of goods between the two regions would take place.

The United States, however, has followed a policy under which "Iron Curtain" countries are placed under virtual embargo, so as not to raise the war potential of the East. Beneficiaries of the Marshall Plan are also enjoined to ship no strategic materials into the Eastern sphere. Definitions as to what goods fall into this category vary, however, and thus American exports have found their way into the Russian sphere by a roundabout route.

The Agrarian Revolution

Much of Eastern Europe, as we have seen, is the breadbasket of the Old World. Although the region abounds in rich soil, it has been poorly tilled. The average grain yield of one Southeastern European hectare (2.4 acres) is only about 37 per cent of the average Danish hectare, even though Denmark's unimproved soil is far inferior. One Southeastern European peasant grows enough food for only one and one-half persons, while a Western European farmer grows enough for four. Thus the

How much wheat can an acre produce?



Each symbol represents 5 bushels per acre in 1931-35

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East is "overpopulated," although the per square mile population is lower than in the West. For instance, one third of the population of Bulgaria and Yugoslovia is "excessive" for the available arable land.

The great agrarian problem of this region is monoculture, cultivating one crop. As there are banana and coffee republics in Latin America, so there are "pork kingdoms" and "corn monarchies" in this region. To mention only one example, fully 82 per cent of pre-World War II Yugoslavia's arable land was devoted to grains. The corresponding figure was even higher—90 per cent—in the black-soil Voyvodina, in the country's northern area. One crop is simple because the peasant on small farms can raise it. It requires hardly any capital, provides work for all the members of the family during the season and keeps famine from the peasant's door. Should, however, that one crop fail, there is the devil to pay. In addition, when the great overseas open-air grain factories of the New World go into production,

they can undersell Danubian wheat in the heart of Danubia.

Primitive farming is traditional in much of this region—the Czech part of Czechoslovakia is always a notable exception—not only because of lack of capital and experience but also because of an over-abundance of tradition. "Good enough for my father; good enough for me," has petrified into a way of life.

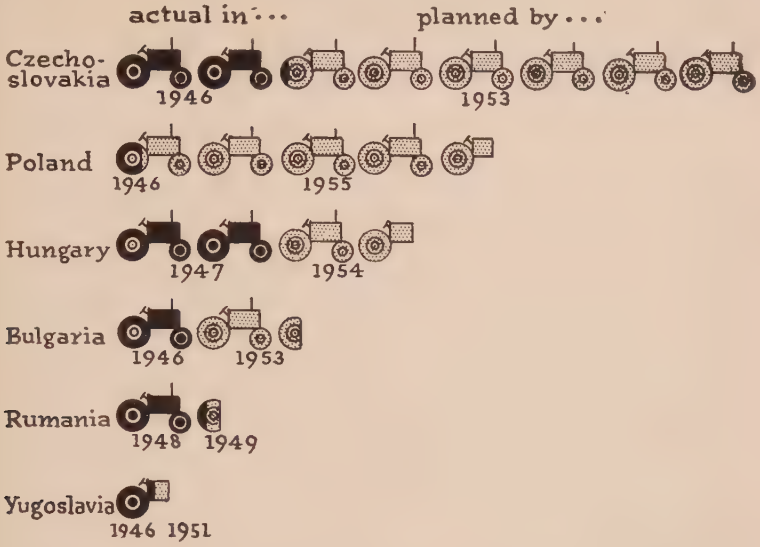
The agrarian new deal of this region envisages a change to multiculture and, particularly, to the more profitable stock raising. Truck farming and horticulture are to come into their own. Since some of this territory is steppe and other is marshland, new farming areas are to be won by irrigation and drainage.

Above all, mechanization and fertilization are to be given their chance to teach the peasant ways and means of bettering his own lot while improving his soil. State experimental farms are to operate as pilot plants for the education of the peasant population. In Hungary, for instance, the agrarian five-year plan which began in 1949 provides for an overall increase of output by 27 per cent, while that of the state farms is to rise by 80 per cent. There, too, horticulture and truck farming are to the fore. New crops are to be introduced wherever possible, such as cotton in the south of the country.

The Problem of Collectivization

Before the First World War much of this region was covered with large semi-feudal estates, *latifundia,* often entailed so that they passed from generation to generation within one family. This was certainly not conducive to intensive cultivation. After 1919, most of these countries introduced land reforms, in order to remove some of the most glaring injustices of economic inequality and also in response to the challenge provided by Soviet distribution of large Russian estates. Hungary was the notable exception; the land reform turned out to be merely a token because the semi-feudal class retained much of its power, and some four million of Hungarian peasants remained landless or dwarf holders.

After the Second World War, Hungary, too, fell into line and



distributed land among some 640,000 families, each of which received allocations between 5 and 6 yokes (1 yoke is 1.37 English acre). Greatest beneficiaries of the reform were farm hands and former estate servants. Building lots to go with the land were assigned to 300,000 families, covering an area of 120,000 yokes. Even so, some 20,000 farm families were left without land because there was not enough, and in many cases the allocations were very small.

In Poland the remaining large estates were also broken up. In the Balkans the holdings of wartime collaborators, expatriated Germans and owners of interbellum accumulations were distributed.

The large estates were not particularly profitable, because of absentee ownership, indifference and conservatism. The small holdings are even less profitable, in most cases, because they do not lend themselves to mechanization and modern cultivation.

Co-operatives or collectives would solve some of these prob-

EASTERN
Baltic Sea
GREAT LOWLA
Vistula
Warsaw
Berlin
Oder
Breslaw
Cracow
Lwow
Elbe
CARPATHIA
Prague
Danube
Vienna
Budapest
ALFOL
THE ALPS
PANNONIA
PLAIN
Trieste
Adriatic Sea
Rome

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lems, but the very mention of collective farming is enough to scare the peasant out of his wits. He is passionately attached to his small plot of land and would prefer to live poorly as its owner than to live better in a collective farm.

The Soviet regime, of course, believes in the superior virtues of the collectives, but it knows that radical action in these peasant countries might set off the spark of rebellion. It is to be assumed that some form of collectivization is the ultimate goal but the roads toward it have been provided with diverse detours.

In Hungary the peasants were encouraged to enter co-operative farm organizations, in which they would retain their separate holdings, while pooling their resources for more efficient management. The National Co-operative Center, MOSZK, could boast of 2,400 farm members three years after the war. It had its own processing industries which it acquired with the expropriated large estates. A multitude of benefits were conferred on the co-operatives, such as cheap seeds, higher prices from government purchasing agents and tax remissions. The rich peasants, *kulaks,* on the other hand, were subjected to higher taxes and driven from political life.

In Rumania, to take another illustration, the Secretary General of the (Communist) Rumanian Workers' Party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, stated early in 1949 that the party must rely on the poor peasants with fewer than seven acres and must wage relentless war on the *kulaks* owning more than fifty acres.

In Poland the "Peasant Self-Help Association" gained control over farm equipment, and its charter set forth the government's policy: "Transition from individual to team farming will proceed slowly in our country and entirely voluntarily, in accordance with the increasing understanding among the peasants of the superiority of team farming over individual farming in proportion to increased production of tractors and agricultural machinery." The President of the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers, Hilari Minc, expressed himself in favor of slow collectivization on the ground that the equipment was in-

sufficient for the execution of a speedier program. Only one per cent of the farm economy was to be collectivized in 1949.

Industrialization

Most of this region lies outside of Europe's great industrial belt, but there are notable exceptions. Czechoslovakia is one of the most highly industrialized countries of Europe, and Poland contains the "Little Ruhr" of Upper Silesia, formerly part of Germany. In recent years Budapest has become one of the major industrial cities of eastern Central Europe.

Since the war, all of these countries have given industrialization top priority. They were poor and exploited, they say, because they had no industries of their own. They point to the examples of Belgium and Switzerland, which are smaller than most of the countries of the Eastern belt, and yet incomparably more prosperous and important at international council tables.

As soon as the war was over, these countries announced two and three-year plans for emergency reconstruction. Yugoslavia was the first country to announce a five-year plan in the spring of 1947. Czechoslovakia announced a five-year plan in October 1948, to be followed in quick succession by Poland's six-year plan, and by the five-year plans of Bulgaria and Hungary.

The Hungarian plan, scheduled to end in 1954, made provisions for a five-year investment of 35 billion forints (about $3 billion nominally, but one-fourth in real purchasing power) of which fully one-half was earmarked for industries and less than 20 per cent—6 billion—for agriculture, while the rest was for communications, housing and cultural and social aims. The accent was on heavy industry and, significantly, industrial development was to be scattered, moving closer to Russia.

The same trend was well illustrated in Yugoslavia where the five-year plan provided for the disbursement of $5.5 billion, at the official rate of the dinar (again higher than its purchasing power). The largest amounts were appropriated for electrification, mining, metallurgy, followed by light industries, food processing, agricultural equipment and building materials.

Large sums were set aside for services ancillary to industrialization, such as technical education and research, urban construction and transportation. By 1951 Yugoslavia was to produce 2.5 times the coal and coke production, 2.5 times the iron ore, 3 times the steel, 7 times the machine and tool output, 9 times the chemical and 450 times the crude oil production of 1939.

Bulgaria's five-year plan envisages industrial production of 50 billion leva (in 1939 prices) by 1953, as compared with 23 billion in 1948 and 13 billion in 1939. By the end of the five-year plan in 1953, power production is to be 4.5 times that of 1948 and coal production 200 per cent above 1937.

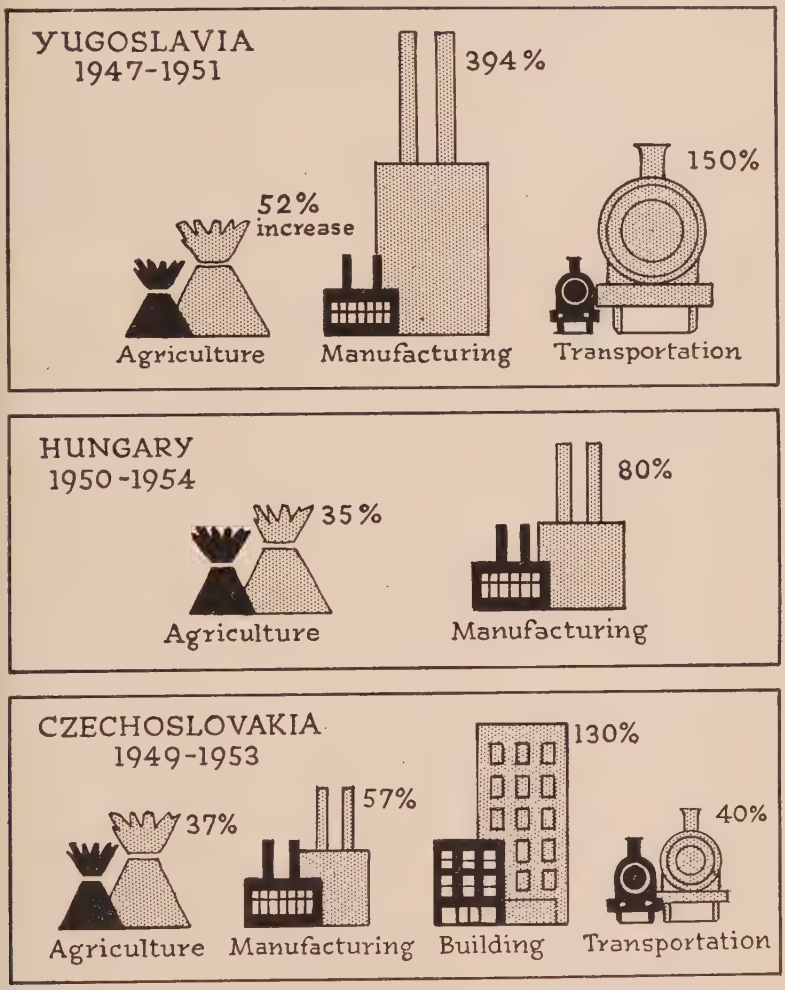
Transportation also took high priority all over this region, and rail links with the Soviet Union received special attention. Those lines were highly inadequate in the past, as the transportation system of this region was oriented toward the West. Slovakia's rail connections with the Soviet Ukraine were improved, and work was launched to build a trunk line in southern and eastern Slovakia. In Rumania two new rail lines were extended to the Soviet frontier, and a third line linking northwest Rumania with the Ukraine was under construction. Bulgaria started building several new lines from the capital to the Danube, and another line is to link the Danube port of Silistra with the Danube-Black Sea trunk line. Several canals are projected, such as the Danube-Tisza Canal in Hungary and the Danube-Black Sea Canal.

How does the Soviet Union fit this region into its own industrial plans? It is now interested in their industrialization, probably on the ground that these countries are so closely integrated in the Eastern orbit that whatever strengthens them also adds strength to Russia.

The industrialization of Eastern Europe has a great weakness, however—scarcity of capital. This was clearly shown by a study of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. It revealed that the highest per capita investment made in Eastern Europe in 1948 was $9 in Yugoslavia, while the corresponding figure in Poland was $7.50, $6 in Czechoslovakia and $4 in Hun-

Some Eastern European Plans

Black symbols represent current production
Gray symbols, proposed targets



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gary, the more advanced countries. The only Western country with a figure nearly as low was Italy with $10 per head, while the Scandinavian countries invested three times as much per capita as the highest Eastern European nations.

This weakness can be overcome either by foreign loans or by capital accumulation at home. Turning its back on the Cominform, Yugoslavia has qualified for Western help, in the form of government and International Bank loans. The other countries of the Soviet orbit will have to fend for themselves. This they can do by consuming less and producing more, introducing a stringent austerity system on the pattern of Soviet Russia's capital accumulation for the financing of five-year plans. It is questionable whether all or any of these countries can go through with such drastic policies. There remains the possibility of aid from the Soviet Union or mutual aid. It is impossible to say whether the Kremlin has improved Russia's finances to the extent where it can extend an effective helping hand to the Eastern belt. While all of these countries have shown remarkable powers of recuperation and are about to reach and, in many instances, have surpassed their prewar "normal" production figures, it is not quite certain whether they could afford to assist their weaker brothers. The weight of evidence is increasing that the Soviet Union hopes for a return to the kind of East-West economic relations that would give Eastern Europe the benefit of Western investments. Whether political, diplomatic and even military factors, as well as economic considerations, will allow this, only time can tell.

Nationalization

One of the most important points in the program of Marxist societies is the nationalization of the means of production and distribution. As soon as the war was over, measures were taken to place the larger industrial and trade concerns under government control in Eastern Europe. Even non-Communists in the area regarded a greater degree of public ownership as inevitable. However, it was believed that only larger industrial units would be affected, while small producers and tradesmen would be left alone. In the first phase of nationalization, the criterion was usually the number of workers employed by various enterprises.

This first moderate stage soon yielded to far more radical

measures as the Communists took power more openly. Czechoslovakia, for instance, which originally had a complex set of rules based upon size for the nationalization of industries, discarded these standards and turned to outright nationalization. By the middle of 1949, 95 per cent of all industry was in government hands, including all wholesale trade and all exports and imports. Only small shopkeepers and artisans were exempt. At this rate scarcely any "private sector" in the Soviet sphere can be expected to survive.

There were several reasons for the extent of these nationalization measures. The dominant Communists, with their belief in the superiority of a planned economy, held the view that planning was impossible as long as industrial production was carried out by many individual units working for private profit. They thought that the benefits of large-scale operations could only be passed on to the public through government ownership.

Another consideration was the fact that many of the industries of this region had been taken over by Germany during the Second World War. Collaboration with the Nazis had been common on the higher industrial level in this region, and the new regimes were unwilling to leave these ownership rights undisturbed. The Communists also contended that if counter-revolution and "fascism" were to be forestalled, capitalism's back had to be broken. They found nationalization of industry and trade easier than collectivization of the land because the "enemy," the owners of industry, were less numerous and more demoralized than the peasant landholding class. Finally, they argued that in case of a "hot war" between the East and West, powerful capitalists in the Soviet sphere would be ready-made fifth columns.

How far expectations for the success of nationalization programs were fulfilled could not be easily ascertained. The execution of the programs suffered greatly from improvisations, scarcity of competent managers and the difficulties involved in uprooting established institutions. To numerous observers this part of the Communist program appeared to be doomed to disappointment.

4. International Problems

Suspicion of one's neighbor has long been a characteristic of Eastern Europe. This is partly due to the fact that there have been too many ethnic groups to be welded into strong national units and partly to the constant eruption of power politics into the lives of small nations. As one large country after another tried to fill the power vacuum of this region, the great powers unscrupulously exploited the weakness of Eastern Europe, pitting neighbor against neighbor, corrupting key classes and key men, using the tactics of divide and rule.

True, some attempts had been made to introduce a measure of unity into this region. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was definitely an economic necessity, even though it turned out to be a political monstrosity. With the awakening of national sentiments in Danubia, it was swept into limbo.

After the First World War the Little Entente was set up by Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. However, the entente was formulated for essentially negative reasons, to keep the Hapsburgs out and to restrain the recalcitrant Hungarians. Attractive plans for political, economic and cultural co-operation remained nothing more than plans. In the mid-thirties some of the Balkan countries also made an attempt at integration, striving to settle their quarrels within the Balkan family. The resulting Balkan Pact was one of those beautiful documents that promised much and performed little. Old habits were too strongly rooted to disappear with the signing of a new treaty.

The early part of the Second World War was a time of messi-

anic expectations. It was recalled that just before Hitler seized the sword, Poland and Czechoslovakia had been fighting over a small piece of border land. Never again in history must such a thing come to pass. Once the Nazis were swept away, peace must be restored for all time in Eastern Europe. With such hopes for a better future, the exiled governments of the first two victims of the Third Reich—Czechoslovakia and Poland—signed a pact of perpetual peace and friendly co-operation. A similar agreement was reached between the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia, two southern Balkan neighbors who had not always seen eye to eye. Unfortunately, the war was not officially over before the Greek-Yugoslav border was in flames. Elsewhere, also, as the war ended it became apparent that old rivalries had not been laid at rest.

The Czechs, normally mild-mannered and tolerant, now announced they would expel millions of Germans and Hungarians residing within their boundaries. Postwar Czechoslovakia would be inhabited only by Slavs. More than two million Germans were expelled and a similar fate awaited some 300,000 Hungarians who were to be shipped to Hungary in exchange for Slovak residents there. Since, however, the number of Slovaks in Hungary was much smaller than the number of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, "exchange" did not appear the proper word. While preparations for this mass transfer were made, the Hungarian minority in the Czech state was stripped of its previous rights.

Only about 100,000 persons were exchanged each way before the transfer was called off and the remaining Hungarians were given full citizenship rights. This appears to have been done at Soviet intervention as the Kremlin sought to quell domestic disturbances in its own back yard. Later, Moscow applied pressure on Prague to repatriate many of the expelled Germans, probably on the ground that they were useful skilled workers in the country's numerous specialized industries, such as porcelain, breweries, arms, glass and costume jewelry.

Transylvania, of course remained an issue—how could it be otherwise? If an evil spirit had set out to mix up people in the

worst possible way, he could not have done any better than in that enchanting land of hills and woods, story-book villages and brooks, fragrant air and neighborly hatreds. There languages, creeds, traditions were so hopelessly mixed up that no formula could offer a solution. After the First World War the entire region was assigned to the Rumanians. About two-thirds of it was reassigned to the Hungarians by the Axis rulers during the Second World War, but afterward the Rumanians received it back in its entirety, including the western marches with their Hungarian population. About a million and half Hungarians were thus attached to Rumania where they were accorded minority rights. This time there was no official *irredentist* propaganda originating in Budapest, but Transylvania was far from being a dead issue.

A minor squabble broke out between Czechoslovakia and Poland over the coal-rich Teschen district near the former's frontiers. The Poles had seized Teschen, renamed Cieszyn, in the post-Munich turmoil, but saw it wrested from them, together with the remainder of their country, by the German Third Reich. Teschen was restored to the Czechs after the war, but it was again claimed by the Poles. When the two republics became definitely Communist, this issue was also buried, probably at Soviet behest.

During and after World War II the Soviet Union effected considerable correction of its frontiers. The most important of these acquisitions was made at the expense of Poland, when Moscow took over the territory east of the Curzon line. This line, proposed as a basis for Polish-Russian settlement in 1919 by Lord Curzon, then British Foreign Secretary, roughly followed the ethnographical boundry between Poles, on the one side, and Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians, on the other. Poland, victorious in its war with the Soviet Union in 1920, extended its territory east of the Curzon line. During World War II Russia regained this area and later compensated the Poles with 40,000 square miles that had been part of Germany, including the productive industrial region of Upper Silesia.

EUROPEAN JIGSAW

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The Soviet Union also made the Czechs cede the easternmost mountainous region of their country, known as Podkarpatska Russ, Carpathian Russia. This territory is inhabited by Ruthenians, another name for Ukrainians or Little Russians, and the region was attached to Soviet Ukraine.

Rumania, in 1940, had to give up Bessarabia and a considerable part of Bukovina to the Soviets. There is an Ukrainian (Ruthenian) minority in both of these areas. Bessarabia had belonged to Russia for over a century, up to the end of the First World War, when it was ceded to Rumania. Bukovina had been a crown land of Austria and was turned over to Rumania when the Hapsburg realm fell apart at the end of World War I.

In the southern part of the Balkans territorial claims and counterclaims were announced in profusion. Defeated Bulgaria asked that victorious Greece should cede a part of the Aegean coastline, so that Bulgaria would have access to the Mediterranean. On the other hand, Greece made counterclaims on Bulgaria for strategic heights running parallel with the Aegean. Athens also asked for southern Albania, which Greeks call Northern Epirus, while Albania asked for part of northwestern Greece. During World War II the Germans gave Yugoslavia's historic Kossovo Plains to the Albanians, but that area was returned to south Slav rule when the Germans withdrew.

As we have seen, Soviet influence throughout Eastern Europe served to check some of these feuds. Harmony was also to be strengthened by the establishment of the Communist Information Bureau in September 1947. Its charter members were the Communist parties of the U.S.S.R., Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia—and also the Communist parties of Italy and France. This organization was soon known as the "Cominform," and it set up headquarters in the Yugoslav capital of Belgrade. It described itself as a united front against the threat of "reactionary and imperialist aggression" led by the United States. The Cominform launched a fortnightly magazine under the slogan: "For lasting peace—for the people's democracy."

Heresy or Schism?

A dramatic split in the supposedly monolithic Communist front occurred in the summer of 1948. Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia had been a Soviet protégé, a full-fledged Communist and the leader of a thoroughly Communist regime. His views appeared to receive the final seal of approval when his capital was chosen as the seat of the new Cominform. Now, suddenly, this organization turned upon him as a heretic.

The Cominform's salvo was many-barrelled: Tito fostered a policy of hate toward the Soviet Union. Leading Yugoslav politicians were carrying out incorrect measures in the villages, pampering the peasants at the expense of the proletariat. The People's Front and not the Communist party had been allowed to become the country's leading force. The bureaucratic regime within the party was pernicious and there was no intraparty democracy. The Yugoslav Communist party was tainted with megalomania, rejecting criticism from other Bolsheviks. Preparations for the mass collectivization of farms had not been effected. "The Information Bureau maintains that the basis of all these faults . . . is the incontestable fact that in [Yugoslav Communist] leadership in the last five to six months openly nationalistic elements prevailed that were formerly masked." Subsequently Cominform headquarters were moved to Bucharest.

Yugoslavia denied all charges and launched a counterattack. It asserted that the Soviet Union was engaged in illicit intelligence service, and that the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade had no business asking for inside information about Yugoslav party work and relaying the intelligence to Moscow.

To understand the background of this conflict is to understand the temper of the land. Yugoslavia is a thoroughly Balkan nation, covered with wild Balkan scenery and boiling over with Balkan temper. It is essentially and profoundly a liberty-loving and rebellious country with a recent and formidable record of revolt against the Nazis.

The best explanation for this feud is that on the Soviet side it was due to what the London *Economist* called "overweening

arrogance and papal abhorrence of heresy," while on Tito's side it was his refusal to submit to interference and unceasing supervision. The Kremlin wanted a closely co-ordinated diplomatic policy among the serried ranks of Communist-controlled states; Tito would be "co-ordinated" only on his own terms.

Forever Macedonia

Linked to this feud was the resurgence of the Macedonian problem, another Balkan jigsaw puzzle. "Macédoine" is the French cooks' name for a salad of many ingredients, and Macedonia is the habitat of even more nationalities per square mile than elsewhere in the Balkans.

Today's Macedonia looks like an inverted pyramid, its apex resting on the Greek Aegean harbor-city of Salonika, bulging out into northern Greece, covering the bulk of southern Yugoslavia and the southwestern corner of Bulgaria. Its largest part is in the South Slav republic, where it is known as Vardar Macedonia, because of the river by which it is traversed. The Bulgarian portion is Pirin Macedonia, named after a mountain range, and the Greek part is Aegean Macedonia, since it abuts on the sea. Vardar Macedonia is one of the component republics of the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia.

Since the fall of ancient Macedonia, a country by that name has never been an independent state. The Macedonians of today are Slavs—unlike Alexander's people of the fourth century B.C.—and they speak a Slavic dialect that is closer to Bulgarian than to Serbo-Croat, but is close enough to both.

It was under the moribund Ottoman empire that Macedonia became a world issue in the last century. Situated on the extreme western peripheries of that realm, it was exposed to the dynamic forces of modern nationalism and the disruptive influences of the great powers. The Turks had the strength to hold on to this region by day, but not by night, when authority was assumed by the terroristic Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, I.M.R.O.

At the end of the Balkan wars of this century the bulk of the

Macedonian region was assigned to Serbia, which after World War I became the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—Yugoslavia. This was resented by the Bulgarians who wanted most, if not all, of Macedonia.

After World War II, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria found themselves in the novel position of being on the same side of the political fence—both with Communist regimes. For some time there was some speculation about the two countries being united in a Greater South Slav Federation, of which the Macedonian Peoples' Republic would form an important part. When, however, the Cominform feud broke out (and some say it was precipitated by this very plan), unification schemes appeared to be doomed, and a new version of the issue came to the fore.

The Premier of Yugoslavia's Macedonian Republic, Lazar Kolishevski, lashed out at Bulgaria, recalling that even its Communists had favored Yugoslavia's occupation by the Axis. He told the world that his Macedonian state had a government of its own, while Bulgaria's Macedonians had no self-government. The charge was hurled back by the Bulgarian government, which accused Yugoslavia of collaboration with the West and designs on Pirin Macedonia.

The Greek Bridgehead

The problem of Aegean Macedonia was catapulted into the Balkan scene by the civil war in Greece. The leader of the Greek guerrilla forces, General Markos Vafiades, considered himself the spokesman of the Greek people. In the spring of 1949 he was relieved of his command, and the announcement was made then that the fight was waged not only for the independence of Greece but also of Macedonia. A "Macedonian National Liberation Front" appeared as part of the "Free Greece" of the mountains. The object of the war was represented as the creation of a Macedonian state in guerrilla-controlled Greece. Clearly, this may have been part of the Cominform plan to combat Tito since such a state could serve as a nucleus of a greater Macedonia.

Greece is another special case within the broader problem of Eastern Europe. "Our country is in the Balkans," the Greeks say, "but not of the Balkans." Unfortunately for them, however, it is both in and of the Balkans. Still worse, it is also part of the highly contested Mediterranean world. Greece's northeastern seacoast could well serve as Russia's most convenient warm water approach. For centuries Russia has felt that it could never play a great power role, in spite of its size, unless it broke out of its landlocked, ice-blocked isolation and reached important trade routes of seaborne global highways. But Britain, once it acquired its empire, has sought to protect the imperial lifeline through the Mediterranean, constantly checking these Russian ambitions.

This conflict is part of the historic background of the present Greek situation. As the liberty-loving Greeks fought the Axis during World War II, a profound ideological split took place in their underground. The right was mainly represented by the Greek National Democratic Movement, E.D.E.S., whose best-known leader was Napoleon Zervas. The left was more numerous and it comprised a coalition of Agrarians, Communists and Socialists united in the National Liberation Front, known as the E.A.M., whose fighting force became known as E.L.A.S.

The war was not over before the right and left began to scrap, the former maintaining that the left was mainly Communist, while the latter charging that the right was tainted with collaboration. The left's prestige was at its peak when the Axis was beaten. The Red Army was sweeping out of the East and the British expeditionary forces quickly landed and took Athens in October, 1944, under the command of Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. In the opinion of many observers, if there had been an election at that time in Greece, the left would have won, and the left seems to have behaved as if it had already won. The British struck at the left, and there were street fights in the capital and pitched battles in the open country. The British forces were smaller but better equipped, and the dazed left was beaten. Under British auspices an agreement was reached be-

tween Greek right and left—the Varkiza Agreement—under which the E.A.M. was recognized as a political movement but the E.L.A.S. was to be disbanded. National elections were to be held, and a plebiscite was to decide if Greece wanted the monarchy restored or preferred a republic.

It was charged later by right and left that the other side never meant to implement the pact. Supported by the concentrated wealth of the country, the right-wing political parties forged ahead, the E.A.M. went underground and civil war flared up throughout Greece, with the heaviest fighting in the northern mountain country.

The British maintained a token military establishment there to make the country "out of bounds" to Soviet influence. Early in 1947 London notified Washington that it was no longer in a position to assist the Greek government. Thereupon President Truman announced his historic doctrine in a message to Congress on March 12: Greece must receive American assistance if it was to become a "self-supporting and self-respecting democracy." He also asked Congress to appropriate funds for Turkey. The Eightieth Congress authorized $300 million for military and economic aid to Greece and $100 million for military assistance to Turkey.

Despite American aid and the assistance of United States military advisers, Greek government forces were unable to shatter the guerrilla ranks during 1948—in fact, the rebel forces in the crucial northern region appear to have increased. It was only in 1949 that the Athens regime began to make headway.

Meanwhile, both United Nations and American Congressional committees looked into the Greek situation. The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, UNSCOB, found that the Greek guerrillas had been receiving aid from Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, mainly in small arms and in places of refuge. The Joint Congressional Committee on Foreign Economic Cooperation—the "Watchdog Committee for the Marshall Plan"—put its finger on one aspect of the problem. Its counsel, Louis E. Wyman pointed out: "In this nation of 7.5 million people, ap-

proximately 1,800 individuals have wealth. The remainder are very poor." The report described the Greek government as unrepresentative and stated that only about 15 per cent of the guerrillas were Communists. "Social reform and better administration," it said, "are fundamental to Greek recovery. . . . The only reason the present government remains in power in Greece is United States support."

The "free Greek" government of General Markos Vafiades was replaced in the spring of 1949 by that of Dimitrius Partsalides, and his cabinet included spokesmen of the Communists, the Agrarian Party, the General Federation of Labor and, significantly, the Macedonian Liberation Front. The inclusion of the latter appears to have been a Cominform maneuver. Thus a civil war was raging within a civil war in this haunted region of the East. In the summer of 1949 the government of Marshal Tito announced that it was closing the Greek-Yugoslav frontier. To some observers it seemed that by closing that frontier he was also closing a chapter in the Balkans' bloody history.

Cultural Conflict

Communism considers clericalism one of its chief foes. A Communist is expected to be a fanatical crusader of a secular faith which has its own scripts, dogmas, rituals and articles of faith. Catholicism is the majority religion in Poland, where more than 91 per cent of the people are its communicants; in Hungary, with 74.8 per cent; and in Czechoslovakia with 69.8 per cent. In the other countries the Eastern Orthodox faith is dominant and, as has been pointed out, it is organized as a national church in each of them with only nominal allegiance to the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul.

The *Kulturkampf,* struggle between church and state, was backed on the one side by the power of the Soviet Union and, on the other hand, by the influence of the Vatican. The governments of these countries claimed that they wanted no more than the separation of church and state, long ago accomplished in the United States. They insisted that they did not go even so far

as the United States had gone, since they would continue to pay ecclesiastical salaries out of the public treasury. But they could not tolerate the church being a dominant influence in education through the parochial schools and in politics through its great wealth accumulated throughout the centuries.

The Vatican, in turn, contended that "communism is materialistic and anti-Christian" and that "Communist leaders, although they sometimes verbally assert that they are not opposed to religion, show themselves nevertheless, both by doctrine and action, to be in reality enemies of God, of the true religion and of the Church of Christ." In its decree of July 13, 1949, the Congregation of the Holy Office stated that Catholics "who profess and particularly those who defend and spread" Communist doctrines incur excommunication and that those who enlist in or show favor to the Communist party are not eligible for the sacraments.

The Czechoslovak Communists, particularly, liked to explain this struggle as being similar to that of Henry VIII of England, which led to the secession from the Holy See and the establishment of the Church of England. Prague gave strong support to the Catholic Action, a dissident Catholic group in favor of the establishment of a Czech national church. In that country there was a precedent for such a creed in the religious organization of the Hussites, followers of John Hus, the Bohemian religious reformer who was excommunicated and burned at the stake in 1415 for teaching the doctrines of John Wycliffe, "Morning Star of the Reformation." By encouraging national Catholic churches in the other countries of this Eastern belt, too, the Communist leaders expected that the influence of the Vatican could be weakened.

In Hungary the Catholic church found an energetic leader for the fight against the new state in the person of the Prince-Primate, Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty. The conflict became intense when the land reform was carried out in that country shortly after the war. The holdings of the Catholic Church were so large that they provided some 145,000 peasant families with

allotments. The Primate issued a strong pastoral letter calling the land reform robbery.

The question of schools was broached next. The Catholic Church in Hungary controlled more than a half of primary schools after World War II—5,000 schools. The new regime declared its intention of secularizing the schools, but the Cardinal raised his voice against this plan, threatening excommunication for all Catholic deputies who would vote for the bill: it became law nevertheless. Eventually, the Cardinal was tried for "treason" and "currency smuggling," found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Czechoslovakia was the scene of the next phase of this struggle. There the state demanded that the bishops swear an oath of allegiance to the People's Democracy, in the expectation that it would contradict the church's allegiance to Rome and imply surrender. In the absence of such allegiance, the church would not be allowed to participate in education or the publication of newspapers and books. Then the government did take over all education, suppressed the Catholic press and book publishing. Archbishop Josef Beran countered with pastoral letters calling on the faithful to stand their ground. In Slovakia, where the influence of the clergy is stronger, there were disorders.

The fight then shifted to Poland where the government denounced the Vatican's excommunication decree, warned that it could not be carried out in Poland and that all activities threatening public order or weakening the peoples' democracy would be prosecuted.

It was easier to silence the voices of religious bodies without the support of powerful international organizations. The Protestant religious bodies could be dealt with more easily—not entirely without forceful measures, however, and Protestant clergymen were jailed in Hungary and Bulgaria. The Greek Orthodox Churches, being national in fact, were also thrown on their own resources and had to yield to Communist pressure.

A dramatic illustration of the attitude of the various churches was provided in Yugoslavia. Charges there were leveled against

the ranking Prince of the Catholic Church and not against the heads of the predominant Orthodox Eastern Catholic (Greek) Church. The Archbishop of Zagreb and Cardinal of Croatia, Aloisius Stepinac, was arrested on September 18, 1946, on the charge of wartime collaboration with the Axis powers and their domestic Fascist allies. Specifically, he was charged with the forcible conversion of Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism during the Axis rule and close co-operation with Croatia's Fascist "Ustashi" movement. The Archbishop was sentenced to sixteen years at hard labor. This action appeared to have squelched the Catholics' open opposition to the Tito regime and may have encouraged Hungary's government to take action against Cardinal Mindszenty.

The Great Illiteracy Belt

This was not merely Europe's great peasant belt but also its great illiteracy belt, with the signal exception of Czechoslovakia where illiteracy was known only in the more backward Slovakian hill country. Hungary also had a respectable record in this regard, but elsewhere illiteracy was very high. In the southern districts of Yugoslavia, for instance, not more than one-third of the inhabitants over ten years of age could read and write. The illiteracy rate for the nation as a whole was 46 per cent, and this was due largely to the fact that 94 per cent of the population of the Slovenian region, in the northwest, who were under Austrian rule before World War I, could read and write. Illiteracy was extremely high in Bulgaria and even more so in Albania.

The postwar regimes introduced far-reaching educational reforms, opened up schools, framed long-range plans for the further extension of education and liberalized teaching methods. No longer was it necessary for a child to tramp long distances to school even in comparatively advanced Hungary. No longer were parents allowed to keep their children at home as farm hands. These regimes also went in for teacher-education on a

large scale. Communist indoctrination was, of course, an important feature of all these changes.

A word is in order about the literature and press of this region. It is to be expected that both of them are becoming increasingly ideological. If you have read one newspaper, you have read them all. Soviet Russia is represented as the land of light, and the Western world as the land of darkness. An inordinately large portion of space is assigned to the misdeeds of "war-mongers" in the West.

Freedom of the press, never too strong in this region (Czechoslovakia always excepted) is now dead. Strangely, criticism is very much alive. While some of the four freedoms are ignored in this area, the freedom to grouse about the government is a privilege to which many thousands of villages cling. The Eastern European peasant has always been an underdog and he has developed a grumbling disposition. Visiting these villages, one finds them full of complaints. But it is a long way between complaints and action, especially under dictatorships.

Is There a Solution?

Few international problems are more difficult to solve than those of Eastern Europe. Twice within a generation this area was used by Russia's foes to launch all-out attacks against the Soviet Union. After victory in World War II Soviet leaders appear to consider the region as a natural bulwark, useful for either offense or defense. The Kremlin is determined, at any rate, not to let this explosive strip of land be turned into another "sanitary cordon" in which its enemies, real or potential, may get a foothold. This seems to be Moscow's overriding consideration, explaining Soviet actions in this region even though it may not justify them.

With the great cleavage between East and West, Cordell Hull's hopes for the growth of democracy in Eastern Europe under the tutelage of the Big Three—the United States, Britain and the U.S.S.R.—have been swept away. The lack of unity among the

Big Three has turned this territory into the hottest battleground of the cold war.

In the long run, however, there is perhaps a less bleak future for both the world and for Eastern Europe. At present Russia seems to have lost the cold war. Realizing that a hot war would turn our globe into a shambles for victor and loser alike, we must turn our attention—our best efforts—to finding peaceful solutions for the problems of this volcanic area.

We must realize that Russia regards this region as important for its defense as we consider Mexico—even more so because we have not been attacked by a dangerous foe from Mexican soil twice within a generation. On the other hand, the Soviet Union probably will not be able to solve the economic problems of this region. If these problems give rise to political and military disorders, as they have done in the past, Eastern Europe may erupt into war once more. By the law of the transmission of disturbances, we, too, would suffer.

It is expected that in due time we shall have consolidated our position in Europe to the extent that we will be able to talk terms with the Soviet Union. One of these terms should be the relaxation of dictatorial stringency in the Soviet sphere, possibly as an exchange for Western economic assistance. There was a time—before World War II—when American capital and know-how were more than welcome not only in Eastern Europe but in the Soviet Union itself. Even now, despite Communist propaganda, there is a fund of goodwill among Eastern Europe's common people for the United States. They are more pro-American than pro-Russian. But if they are subject to an economic blockade—and this blockade receives due attention from Communist propagandists—this goodwill can easily disappear.

Because Eastern Europe has seen more bloodshed than most other parts of the world, it is an area where a longing for real and lasting peace is strong. If a *modus vivendi* among the Big Three can be achieved, these peoples will be willing and wholehearted co-operators in building a lasting peace.

American Policy In Eastern Europe

by Joseph C. Harsch

THE WAVE OF PROFOUND anxiety and resentment which swept America immediately following the Communist coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia in early 1948 was more important to postwar history than the coup itself. It demonstrated that the American people were consciously and intensely interested in Eastern Europe and more concerned about events there than their own leaders had realized; and probably very much more so than the governments of Europe and Asia had appreciated until that time.

The extent to which this demonstration of American interest influenced Soviet policy in subsequent months is a matter of speculation. But there is ample evidence for documenting the thesis that the American public's reaction came as a surprise to the men in the Kremlin and that it has had a major influence in bringing about a more cautious behavior in Moscow than previously.

In America it was the Czech coup d'etat which converted a reluctant and half-hearted acceptance of the Truman Doctrine into almost universal approval of the doctrine. From the day the news came from Prague of the overthrow of the Benes government there was never any doubt about popular acceptance of the Marshall Plan in America. And it was from that moment that American rearmament enjoyed real popular sanction.

It is doubtful that a majority of the Americans who were

so agitated over the coup could then, or today, explain their reasons. But the fact does have strong underlying reasons. The simplest is that millions of American citizens are sons and grandsons of the Eastern European peoples. Another is that the economic well-being of Western Europe depends on trade with Eastern Europe; and any historic development which tends to strangle that trade is a blow at Western Europe.

More important still, Eastern Europe is the potential balance of power between Western Europe and the lands controlled by Moscow. If you add these Eastern states to the power domain of Russia, then Western Europe becomes a peninsula projecting precariously from a vast Russian mainland. But if you add these states to the power orbit of the West, then Russia's physical power and political influence is contained well short of the outer boundaries of the Slavic peoples.

Both the reasons and the American public acceptance of them, as demonstrated by the reaction to the Czech coup, establish as a major factor in today's world that America is interested—culturally, economically, politically and strategically—in the fate of Eastern Europe. Translated into more specific language this means that America is committed to the proposition that Soviet Russia must not be allowed to consolidate a total power monopoly over Eastern Europe.

Men may differ, as they do, over whether America should commit itself to this proposition. The Henry Wallace school of thought contends that Eastern Europe is just as much the proper and natural sphere of Soviet influence as Central America is the proper and natural sphere of United States interest. Yet it is plain that American opinion has rejected this concept and seeks not only the containment of Russian influence within its present frontiers of influence, but also Russia's withdrawal back behind those present frontiers. Although this has become a simple and cardinal policy of the United States, the details of the objective and the means to be employed to the agreed end are still far from being defined. It is one thing to say that

Soviet Russia must not be allowed to enjoy a continuing monopoly in Eastern Europe. It would be quite another to say that the United States should itself gain the monopoly of influence in Eastern Europe or that Russian influence must be eliminated totally.

What Means to Use?

Then there is the question of means to the end. Does America think in terms of working to overthrow the governments now serving Moscow's purposes in Eastern Europe or in terms of seeking gradually to encourage those governments to amend their policies and inclinations towards what might become a sort of neutral position between Russia and the West? Before these controversial questions can be answered, America must clarify in its own mind precisely what it does want in Eastern Europe.

Traditionally, that part of the world has always been a twilight zone between East and West. It has never been dominated totally by either one for any substantial period of time. It has an identity of its own—the product of a conflict of interests that meet and blend, or struggle, within its cultural, social and economic life. Since the end of the war it has plainly been Russian policy to end this established condition, to remould the Eastern European tier of states into Russia's image and, presumably, to merge them ultimately within the formal frontiers of the Soviet Union. America's difficulties over deciding what its purpose is, and over how to achieve that purpose, spring from confused information as to what Russia has succeeded in doing so far, and from a strong tendency to oversimplify the picture.

Thanks to the split between Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia and the Cominform, much new light has been thrown on the problem and on the possible means to its solution. Until the Tito break with the Cominform there was a strong tendency to assume that Moscow's grip on Eastern Europe could be broken only by war. And also until the Tito break there was a strong tendency to assume that American purposes could be achieved

only by a restoration to power of the elements which had controlled these governments before the war.

Whether these assumptions are valid depends partly on a definition of American objectives and partly on a calculation as to the possibility that governments which have taken office under the aegis of the Red Army and in the name of Russian communism will continue indefinitely to govern their countries primarily in the interests of Soviet Russia.

Three Principal Elements

Any understanding of these two aspects of the matter begins with an analysis of precisely what has happened in the "satellite" countries since their "liberation" by the Red Army. There are three principal elements in what has happened. One is the fact of dominant Russian influence. In the beginning this was universal throughout the area of Red Army control; it still exists everywhere except in Yugoslavia. The second is a social revolution. The third is the employment of Russian police state methods.

The great question is whether these three elements of the pattern in Eastern Europe are, from the American point of view, separable or inseparable. Or, to state it differently, are American interests in Eastern Europe served adequately if dominant Russian influence is broken, or can they only be served adequately if all three manifestations of the Soviet period are broken?

No certain answers can yet be given to these questions, but the following observations are in order. Yugoslavia experienced all three manifestations of the Soviet period. Yugoslavia remains today a police state and one of the scenes of the experiment in applied Marxian social revolution. Yet Yugoslavia has broken with Soviet Russia and the leaders of Yugoslavia are today engaged in carrying forward their Marxian social revolution and at the same time waging a bitter and deadly cold war with Moscow.

In other words, so far as Yugoslavia is concerned, the evidence is already conclusive that a state living under an originally

Russian-sponsored government not only can be enticed away from Moscow control but can break with Moscow of its own volition without any enticement at all. So far as breaking Moscow control over Yugoslavia was concerned all the United States had to do was stand on the sidelines and let it happen. Contrary to Moscow propaganda, American diplomacy played no part whatever in the break, not even appreciating the possibility of the break until it happened.

But circumstances were unusual in Yugoslavia. It was the only "satellite" country which had never been infiltrated by Russian agents during its "loyal" period. And Yugoslavia remains today both a police state and a Communist state. The fact that it is a police state should not cause American policy much concern. It was also a police state in its Western-oriented prewar form. But the fact that it is still a Communist state is a subject for careful thought.

Titoism has already proved its contagious power throughout the Communist world. There is a formal anti-Moscow, pro-Tito "Free Communist Party" in Berlin. There are similar informal movements within the Communist party in every other country in the world, more openly of course outside the Russian sphere of influence. That they also exist inside the Russian orbit is amply testified by the purge of once prominent Communists in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria.

This split within the Communist party is of course of enormous advantage to the anti-Communist cause. There is, however, one long-term possibility which America cannot overlook in its calculations. Tito speaks for equalitarian communism. What he rejects primarily is the Russian doctrine that Communist interests the world around must be subordinated to Russian direction for the sake of preserving the "power base of world communism." If this concept should gain wide currency, Tito might conceivably emerge ultimately as the wielder of greater influence within the Communist movement than Stalin possesses today. This is a possible reason for caution in helping Tito to survive the accumulating onslaughts of the Cominform.

Then there is the question whether what happened in Yugoslavia can repeat itself in other "satellite" countries. Certainly it will never happen in exactly the same way, for many of the conditions which brought it about are not repeated in any of the other countries. Yet basically the reason for the split was a conflict between Russian and Yugoslav national interests. That condition, already existing in varying degrees, can repeat itself significantly in the other countries.

In the beginning of the postwar period Western calculations were inclined to assume that the social revolutions imposed by the new Russian-sponsored governments were the greatest weakness of those governments. Events have proved this to have largely been a false assumption. In each country the dispossessed class is bitter and hostile to the government. But the dispossessed class is small, and what influence it once wielded was compromised by a fairly general tendency to collaborate with the Germans during the war. Any recent traveler in these countries knows that the misfortunes of the dispossessed class are mourned primarily by its members but not enough by the general population to amount to a condition of political significance. The real strength of the regimes actually lies in the social changes carried out since the war. Many of those changes are anathema to America, but acceptance of them as being desirable is fairly general throughout Eastern Europe.

Events have demonstrated that the weakness of the "satellite" governments lies primarily in their inclination to bow to the will of Moscow. This has meant depressing the economies of the countries to make them more productive for the benefit of Russia. It has also meant policies which in some cases run across the native inclinations of the peoples.

Poland is the best example of a country which purports to be a loyal devotee of all Soviet Russian policies and which has also been extremely slow about putting some of those policies into force. After four years of Communist domination there is, so far as the Western embassies in Warsaw have been able to determine, only one collective farm operating in the entire coun-

try. And while the Polish regime has done many things to make life difficult and unpleasant for the Catholic Church, that church is still the recognized, established and subsidized church of the country. This hesitation to move in force against peasant and church in Poland is presumably only a tactic of communism. But it also testifies to the fact that the members of the regime have good and valid reasons of their own to go slowly on policies which would seriously antagonize large masses of the people.

Events may well prove that what happened in Yugoslavia will never repeat itself in any other Eastern European country. It is reasonable to assume that the Russians, now alerted, will do everything within their power to prevent a repetition. They are also doing everything they can to reverse the Yugoslav story. Yet it would seem from existing experience that opportunities may well develop in the future for the West to find out and exploit openings between the present regimes and Moscow.

New Western Policies

Before the Tito break American diplomacy based its operations in Eastern Europe largely on the hope of being able to exploit differences between the mass of the people and the governments. Particularly in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia the American embassies and legations maintained contact almost exclusively with the elements in the population which were hostile to the regimes.

Since the Tito break this practice has gradually diminished. Contact is still maintained with the dissident elements. But, following the British lead, relations with the governments have become more "correct." That is to say, American diplomacy has put itself in a position from which it would be better able to exploit differences that might develop between the governments to which they are accredited and Moscow.

This change in tactics may or may not pay off, depending on many variables. But the original tactic did not pay off. From the point of view of power politics the Tito break was worth far more to the West than all the contacts maintained with the

dissidents. One way of measuring its value is that it is costing a billion dollars to equip nine French divisions, while the Tito break brought twenty Yugoslav divisions potentially over to the Western side for nothing.

It would certainly be true to say that if America defines its purpose in Eastern Europe to be the breaking of Russian control, the undoing of the social revolution, the restoration of the political status quo and the end of police states then the American end can be gained only by war. There is very great doubt that even a quick and successful war could produce all of these changes—except possibly for the duration of an American military occupation. But it is certainly unquestionable that war is the only method which would offer even a slight hope of achieving such a comprehensive American policy in Eastern Europe.

Without a war the probabilities are strong that the social revolution will be consolidated throughout Eastern Europe, no matter what the future relations of those countries with Russia and the West may be. And without a war it is highly unlikely that there will be many evidences of liberalized police rule. Tito has speeded his Communist policies since the break. And Tito has been forced for his own protection to tighten his police rule. The only difference in this last respect is that the attentions of his secret police are now directed primarily against Cominform agents instead of against agents of the West and members of the dispossessed class. It is axiomatic that any other Eastern European country which breaks from Moscow will also have to intensify its police rule in order to survive the pressures from Moscow and the Cominform.

The problem for America in Eastern Europe really comes down to the following. If America wants to wipe out everything that has happened during the past four years, it must go to war with Russia, liberate Eastern Europe by force of arms and attempt to reimpose the prewar status quo by a long occupation. The attempt would probably fail. But there is a chance, providing everything went according to plan, that it might be done.

On the other hand if America is interested primarily in break-

ing the exclusive control of Moscow, there is a fairly good chance of success short of war. It has already happened in Yugoslavia without any effort on America's part whatsoever. It could happen in other places. Poland is probably the most likely place for a gradual development of independence on the part of the existing regime. Bulgaria is a country where a real popular revolution is conceivable, with encouragement from Tito. If America were willing, it might also help Tito penetrate Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Tito's brand of communism is probably a more effective instrument for breaking up the Iron Curtain than Western liberalism, Western free enterprise or emigré groups.

However, the end result of such a process would not be an Eastern Europe totally free from Russian influence or totally dominated by Western influence. Tito is unlikely to ever subordinate himself to anyone. What would come out of it would be a revival of the Eastern European twilight zone in which Western influence would continually vie with Russian influence. The best that might come of it would be a buffer area separating Russia and the West. That might be the most practicable solution. It is certainly the solution which Eastern Europe itself would prefer.

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